

POST 2006 INITIATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT

WORKING GROUP: Energy Assistance – Revised Report

DATE: 6/25/04

LOCATION: ICC Chicago with phone hook-up to ICC Springfield

I ATTENDEES:

Representatives of ICC, IEA, Ameren, Commonwealth Edison, Nicor, Peoples, Mt. Carmel, Mid American Energy, Cook County States Attorney, IL Attorney General (AG), IL Public Aid (PA), IL Natural Resources(DNR), IL Industrial Electric Consumers (IIEC), Giordano/Trizac, IL Community Action Assn, Community Energy Cooperative & Low Income Advocacy Project attended, twenty in person and four by phone hookup to ICC's Springfield office. A complete log is available from Conveners if desired.

II a ISSUES DISCUSSED FROM FINAL ISSUES LIST

Issue 90 – How should state energy assistance programs be provided for low-income customers who cannot afford to pay just and reasonable rates?

- “What administrative changes or modifications can be made to the state’s energy assistance program to streamline and make more effective the program’s grant administration and inter-agency communications?” Discussion on this question included substantial support for the concept of making the LIHEAP intake process a “one-stop-shopping” venue for various services provided to low-income citizens. Utility representatives also suggested that the state follow through on the concept of electronic funds transfers as part of the new LIHEAP information technology system.
- “What efforts, if any, should be made to have the state’s energy assistance program serve increased numbers of eligible households?” A point was made that there is probably some level of participation that is unattainable given individual consumer attitudes and that historically LIHEAP participation levels have consistently been near 40% of eligible households. Several working group members also described various government, private and utility outreach efforts in this regard.
- Follow up discussions on earlier questions from last meeting within Final List Question No. 90. Two additional concepts were raised at this point: (1) the need for special reconnection plans to be codified; and (2) the need for a year-round approach to energy assistance programs. There was considerable discussion on both issues and the co-convenor Monk agreed to attempt to obtain information from the State of Ohio regarding its year-round energy assistance program. Also, Rick Fiddyment of DNR agreed to attempt to calculate the overall cost of a year-round program under some different participation scenarios. Both research efforts should be completed by the next working group meeting.

Issue 91 – Is the current surcharge level adequate for energy assistance?

- Co-convenor Monk provided background information regarding the history and current levels of the state energy assistance surcharge. During the discussion that followed a point was made that use of the term “adequate” in the Final List Question was probably inappropriate since there is little doubt that both federal and state LIHEAP funding still do not completely satisfy the need for energy assistance, however no consensus was reached on this point. There was general support for the concept that the surcharge should at the least remain in place at the current level on a going-

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forward basis beyond 2006. Further discussion on this Final List Question will take place during the next working group meeting.

II b OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Anti-trust guidelines in effect for the meeting were referenced.
- Reviewed Progress Report from June 11 meeting with no changes suggested
- Again asked for any proposed additions to Final Issues list – two to be considered further at next meeting as possible additions:
 - Would the adoption of various scenarios being considered by Procurement and Rates Working Groups have any impact on Energy Assistance programs if power supply is procured in a certain way?
 - If an alternative power supplier provides power to a customer who qualifies for energy assistance, are any modifications to rules/programs needed to recognize a delivery supplier and power supplier both are involved?
- Discussed coordination of issues between workgroups via weekly convener meetings. Some discussion to start considering how any items in our Final Report will be meshed with the Final Reports of the other four Working Groups.
- Reviewed dates for remaining meetings, all on Fridays in the ICC main hearing room in Chicago (except for 7/16), from 11 am – 1 pm to allow train travel.
 - July 9 – Chicago
 - July 16 – Bloomington – Nicor
 - July 30 – Hold in case additional meeting needed in Chicago
 - August 6 – Chicago

III PRESENTERS - None

IV PRESENTATION SUMMARIES - None

V CONCLUSIONS REACHED ISSUE: None

VI COMMENTS - None

VII TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Review any further discussion items on Issue 90 “How should state energy assistance programs be provided for low-income customers who cannot afford to pay just and reasonable rates?” Continue discussion on Issue 91 “Is the current surcharge level adequate for energy assistance?” with data being developed resulting from today’s discussion. Begin Issue 92 “Are there other regulatory and/or legislative mechanisms that should be considered?” and consider how the three Issues can be molded into any possible recommendations.

VIII TIME AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

Friday, July 9 at ICC Chicago office from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, with ICC Springfield phone hookup.

Jim Monk/Jon Carls, Co-Conveners